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ABSTRACT

This booklet on women workers of minority races includes all races in a minority other than white, Negroes constituting about 90 percent of all persons other than white in the United States; Spanish-speaking persons are included in the white population. The following topics are encompassed; labor force participation; unemployment; marital status; women as heads of families; working mothers; children of working mothers; education; employment status of dropouts; occupations; full-time and full-year workers; and, earnings. Tabulated statistics are provided for the following; percent of persons in labor force, by sex, race, and age, 1971; percent of women in labor force, by race and marital status, March 1971; work experience in 1970 of women family heads in poor families, by race; percent of mothers in labor force, by race, age of children, and marital status of mother, March 1971; number of own children of working mothers, by race, type of family, and age of children, March 1971; employment status of high school graduates not enrolled in college and dropouts aged 16 to 21 years, by sex and race, October 1970; median years of school completed by workers 18 years of age and older, by sex and race, March 1959 and 1971; major occupation groups of employed women, by race, 1960 and 1971; and, median wage and salary income in 1970, by race and sex. (RJ)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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WOMEN'S BUREAU
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210

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# FACTS ON WOMEN WORKERS OF MINORITY RACES*

Recent efforts to improve the social and economic status of workers of minority races have led to better jobs and higher earnings for many minority women. Between 1960 and 1971, the proportion of all minority women workers employed in professional and technical jobs rose from 6 to 11 percent and the proportion in clerical jobs rose from 9 to 22 percent. Over the same 11-year period, the proportion in private household work decreased from 35 to 17 percent. Moreover, the median wage or salary income of women of minority races employed full time year round rose from $2,372 in 1960 to $4,674 in 1970. Even in 1960 constant dollars, this was an increase of 50 percent.

Despite these advances, substantial differences persist between the employment patterns of minority women and those of other groups. Minority women are more likely than white women to be in the labor force, to be working wives, and to be working mothers. Minority women workers generally have less formal education, higher rates of unemployment, and lower income than their white counterparts. They are also more likely to be in low-skilled, low-wage occupations. In comparison with minority men, they experience higher rates of unemployment and have lower earnings on the average.

## Labor Force Participation

There were 4.1 million women of Negro and other minority races in the labor force in 1971. Nearly 50 percent of them (43 percent of all white women) were workers. Minority women accounted for 11 percent of all women 16 years of age and over in the population but 13 percent of all women workers. Although the overall rate of labor force participation was higher for minority than white women, among teenagers the situation was reversed. The difference in labor force participation between minority and white women was greatest among those in the age group 25 to 34 years--59 and 44 percent, respectively.

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*Minority races include all races other than white. Negroes constitute about 90 percent of all persons other than white in the United States. Spanish-speaking persons are included in the white population.

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PERCENT OF PERSONS IN LABOR FORCE, BY SEX, RACE, AND AGE, 1971

| Age | Women | | Men | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Minority | White | Minority | White |
| Total | 49.2 | 42.6 | 74.9 | 79.6 |
| 16 and 17 years | 21.9 | 36.4 | 32.4 | 49.2 |
| 18 and 19 years | 41.4 | 55.0 | 58.9 | 67.8 |
| 20 to 24 years | 56.0 | 57.9 | 81.5 | 83.2 |
| 25 to 34 years | 59.2 | 43.6 | 92.9 | 96.3 |
| 35 to 44 years | 61.0 | 50.2 | 92,0 | 97.0 |
| 45 to 54 years | 59.4 | 53.7 | 86.9 | 94.7 |
| 55 to 64 years | 47.1 | 42.5 | 77.8 | 82.6 |
| 65 years and over | 11.5 | 9.3 | 24.5 | 25.6 |
| 18 to 64 years | 56.1 | 49.6 | 84.9 | 90.3 |

Unemployment

Unemployment among minority women increased in 1971 for a second consecutive year. The rate for those 16 and over rose to 10.8 percent, up from 9.3 percent in 1970. Teenage minority girls experienced particularly severe unemployment in 1971; their rate of 35.5 percent--up from 34.4 percent in 1970--was almost 2½ times that of white girls, and considerably more than the 28.9 percent rate for minority teenage boys.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, BY SEX, RACE, AND AGE, 1970 AND 1971

| Race and age | Women | | Men | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1971 | 1970 | 1971 | 1970 |
| Minority: | | | | |
| Total 16 years and over | 10.8 | 9.3 | 9.1 | 7.3 |
| 16 to 19 years | 35.5 | 34.4 | 28.9 | 24.9 |
| 20 years and over | 8.7 | 6.9 | 7.2 | 5.6 |
| White: | | | | |
| Total 16 years and over | 6.3 | 5.4 | 4.9 | 4.0 |
| 16 to 19 years | 15.2 | 13.3 | 15.1 | 13.7 |
| 20 years and over | 5.3 | 4.4 | 4.0 | 3.2 |

Marital Status

About half of the minority women workers in March 1971 were married and living with their husbands. Twenty-seven percent were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands, and the remaining twenty-three percent were single. Among minority women, those with husband present were somewhat more likely to be in the labor force than were single women or those who were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands. Among white women on the other hand, those with husband present were less likely to be in the labor force than were single women, but slightly more likely than those who were widowed, divorced, or separated.

PERCENT OF WOMEN IN LABOR FORCE, BY RACE AND MARITAL STATUS, MARCH 1971

| Marital status | Minority | White |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 47.9 | 41.8 |
| Single | 45.4 | 54.0 |
| Married (husband present) | 52.5 | 39.7 |
| Widowed, divorced, or separated | 43.1 | 37.6 |

Women Heads of Families

About 3 out of every 10 families of minority races were headed by a woman in March 1971, as contrasted with less than 1 out of 10 among white families. Minority families headed by a woman were more than twice as likely to be poor as similar white families--54 and 25 percent, respectively.

About three-fifths of both minority and white female family heads had worked in 1970. Among families headed by a woman who worked year round full time, the incidence of poverty was almost four times greater for minority than for white families--18 and 5 percent, respectively.

For those families headed by a woman who had no work experience during the year, the likelihood of poverty was very great--76 percent and 38 percent for minority and white families, respectively.

WORK EXPERIENCE IN 1970 OF WOMEN FAMILY HEADS
IN POOR FAMILIES, BY RACE

| Race | Total | No work experience | Worked during year | Worked year round full time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of families in poverty headed by a woman | | | |
| Total | 1,934,000 | 1,099,000 | 835,000 | 147,000 |
| Minority | 837,000 | 443,000 | 394,000 | 72,000 |
| White | 1,097,000 | 656,000 | 441,000 | 75,000 |
| | As percent of all families headed by a woman | | | |
| Total | 32.5 | 47.1 | 23.1 | 7.7 |
| Minority | 53.5 | 75.6 | 40.3 | 17.9 |
| White | 25.0 | 37.6 | 16.7 | 4.9 |

Working Mothers

Minority mothers in the labor force in March 1971 totaled 1.7 million, or 14 percent of all working mothers. Sixty-one percent of minority women with children 6 to 17 years of age, but only 47 percent of those with children under 6 years, were labor force members. Among white mothers, the comparable figures were 51 and 29 percent, respectively.

The labor force participation rate for married minority mothers and those of other marital status (widowed, divorced, and spouse absent) were roughly comparable. On the other hand, white mothers with husband present had a much lower labor force participation rate than those of other marital status.

PERCENT OF MOTHERS IN LABOR FORCE, BY RACE, AGE OF CHILDREN, AND MARITAL STATUS OF MOTHER, MARCH 1971

| Race and age of children | All ever-married | Married (husband present) | Other marital status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Minority: | | | |
| Total | 53.9 | 53.1 | 55.7 |
| Children 6 to 17 | 61.3 | 60.5 | 62.7 |
| Children under 6 | 46.8 | 46.9 | 46.3 |
| White: | | | |
| Total | 40.7 | 38.4 | 61.5 |
| Children 6 to 17 | 50.9 | 48.4 | 69.4 |
| Children under 6 | 29.3 | 27.7 | 48.5 |

The rate of labor force participation of mothers with husband present rose sharply during the past decade (1960 data are not available for mothers without husband present). The increase was most substantial--nearly 20 percentage points--among minority mothers with children under 6 years old.

Children of Working Mothers

Some 4.5 million, or 18 percent, of the children with working mothers in March 1971 were minority. Nearly 3 out of 10 of these children (about 2 out of 10 children of white working women) were under 6 years of age.

The proportion whose working mothers were family heads was almost three times higher for Negro than for white children--33 and 12 percent, respectively.

NUMBER OF OWN CHILDREN OF WORKING MOTHERS, BY RACE, TYPE OF FAMILY, AND AGE OF CHILDREN, MARCH 1971

| Race and type of family | All children under 18 years | Children under 6 years | Children 6 to 17 years |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Minority** | 4,539,000 | 1,218,000 | 3,321,000 |
| Husband-wife family | 3,057,000 | 875,000 | 2,182,000 |
| Female-head family | 1,482,000 | 343,000 | 1,139,000 |
| White | 21,184,000 | 4,431,000 | 16,753,000 |
| Husband-wife family | 18,564,000 | 3,950,000 | 14,614,000 |
| Female-head family | 2,620,000 | 481,000 | 2,139,000 |

Education

Most minority women workers are high school graduates. In March 1971, 55 percent had graduated from high school, including 8 percent who had completed 4 or more years of college. The comparable figures for white women were 73 and 12 percent, respectively.

The median 12.1 years of schooling for minority women workers in 1971 was nearly 3 years higher than the median in 1959. Both women and men of minority races are narrowing the education gap between themselves and their white counterparts.

MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY WORKERS 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER, BY SEX AND RACE, MARCH 1959 AND 1971

| Date | Women | | Men | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Minority | White | Minority | White |
| March 1959 | 9.4 | 12.2 | 8.3 | 11.9 |
| March 1971 | 12.1 | 12.5 | 11.4 | 12.5 |

## Employment Status of Dropouts

High school dropouts are a special problem in the labor market; they are seriously disadvantaged compared with those who stay in school and graduate. In October 1970 the unemployment rate of 22 percent for 16- to 21-year-old female dropouts was double the rate for those who had graduated from high school but were not enrolled in college. Unemployment among female dropouts of minority races was alarmingly high--37.4 percent. The rate among those who had graduated was somewhate lower but still excessive--20.8 percent. It is obvious that discrimination remains a serious threat to young minority women seeking employment.

Many women dropouts were married and thus had family responsibilities keeping them from the labor force. Other factors besides discrimination, such as quality of schooling, geographic location, inexperience, and immaturity, also were deterrents to those who might otherwise have sought employment.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES NOT ENROLLED IN COLLEGE AND DROPOUTS AGED 16 TO 21 YEARS, BY SEX AND RACE, OCTOBER 1970

| Sex and race | Graduates not enrolled in college | | Dropouts | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Labor force participation rate | Unemployment rate | Labor force participation rate | Unemployment rate |
| Women: | | | | |
| Total | 70.7 | 11.2 | 38.7 | 21.8 |
| Minority | 66.3 | 20.8 | 39.6 | 37.4 |
| White | 71.3 | 10.1 | 38.5 | 17.3 |
| Men: | | | | |
| Total | 91.6 | 12.0 | 82.5 | 21.4 |
| Minority | 85.7 | 18.5 | 73.4 | 27.8 |
| White | 92.4 | 11.2 | 85.7 | 19.4 |

Occupations

Minority women workers are more heavily concentrated than white women in the lower paid occupations, even though they have made substantial progress in occupational status since 1960. Over the 11-year period, the percentage of minority women increased in high-paying occupation groups, with a corresponding decrease in the percentage holding lower paying jobs.

MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUPS OF EMPLOYED WOMEN,
BY RACE, 1960 AND 1971 1/

| Selected major occupation group | 1971 | | 1960 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Minority | White | Minority | White |
| Number (in thousands) | 3,658 | 26,217 | 2,821 | 19,376 |
| Percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Professional and technical workers | 10.6 | 15.1 | 6.9 | 13.1 |
| Nonfarm managers and officials | 2.4 | 5.4 | 1.8 | 5.4 |
| Clerical workers | 22.0 | 35.6 | 9.3 | 32.9 |
| Sales workers | 2.7 | 7.8 | 1.5 | 8.5 |
| Operatives | 15.4 | 13.0 | 14.1 | 15.1 |
| Private household workers | 16.5 | 3.2 | 35.1 | 6.1 |
| Service workers (except private household) | 27.0 | 16.0 | 21.4 | 13.7 |
| Other occupations | 3.4 | 3.9 | 10.8 | 5.2 |

1/ Women 16 years and over in 1971 but 14 years and over in 1960.

The occupational distribution of minority women in 1971 also differed from that of minority men. Even though 38 percent of the women were white-collar workers, nearly three-fifths of these had clerical jobs--which for minority women paid less on the average than minority men earned in factory jobs. Only 23 percent of minority men were white-collar workers, but an additional 13 percent were skilled craftsmen or foremen. In contrast to 15 percent of women, 27 percent of the men were operatives (mostly factory workers). Forty-three percent of the women, but only 15 percent of the men, were service workers.

## Full-Time and Full-Year Workers

Most minority women workers are employed full time (35 or more hours per week). In 1971, 74 percent of minority women employed in nonagricultural industries were on full-time schedules. The proportion for white women was approximately the same.

There is likewise very little difference between the proportions of minority and white women who work a full year. Among the women who worked at any time during 1970, 59 percent of minority and 56 percent of white women worked 50 to 52 weeks during the year either full or part time, and 42 percent of minority and 41 percent of white women worked full time the year round.

## Earnings

Although the discrepancies between the earnings of minority women and those of white women and minority men persist, the gaps are narrowing. The median wage or salary income in 1970 of fully employed minority women was 85 percent as much as that of white women and 71 percent as much as that of minority men. In 1960 the proportions were 70 and 63 percent, respectively.

MEDIAN WAGE OR SALARY INCOME IN 1970, BY RACE AND SEX

| Race | All workers | | Year-round full-time workers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| Total | $3,785 | $7,939 | $5,403 | $9,104 |
| Minority | 3,285 | 5,485 | 4,674 | 6,598 |
| White | 3,870 | 8,254 | 5,490 | 9,373 |

The earnings of married women make a substantial contribution to total family income. Nonfarm minority wives who worked in 1970 contributed a median of 31 percent to family income (for white wives, the median was 26 percent).

* * * * * * *

High unemployment rates and low wages are sharp reminders that minority women, as a group, are still very vulnerable to economic changes, despite improvement during recent years in their educational attainment and occupational status. Teenagers just entering the labor force are particularly susceptible to changes in labor market conditions. In addition, the total incomes of minority women and the economic plight of women workers who are heads of families show the need for increased stress on providing equal employment and training opportunity for minority women and assistance to the working poor.

Note.--Data are from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.



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